

**REMARKS / ARGUMENTS**

Claims 26 and 35 have been amended to clarify the distinction between these claims and the prior art relied upon in this Office Action. Claim 27 has been amended to correct a typographical error, which led to the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

New claims 38 and 39 have been added.

Claim 26 has been amended to require electronic examination of the object and verification by the marine handling craft at the stand off distance that the object can be safely moved into closer proximity to the primary platform. Axelsson et al is concerned only with the physical movement of floating device to a ship by a cradle. There is nothing in Axelsson et al. to suggest that the cradle is to be used at a standoff distance to examine the object to determine if it can be safely moved into proximity with the primary platform. The handling craft of the present invention captures the object at a stand off distance so that damage will not occur to the primary platform if the object is dangerous.

Claim 35 has been amended to state that the marine handling craft includes electronic sensors, located on the marine handling craft responsive to potentially dangerous contents on the supply vessel for detecting potential hazards to the ship. This makes it possible to transfer supplies after a determination that the contents of the supply vessel are not dangerous to the ship. Here to the marine handling craft is deployable at a distance from the ship to prevent damage to the ship. Axelsson et al does not teach or suggest this approach to safe transfer of cargo to a ship.

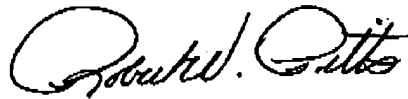
Claims 26-37 are believed to now be patentable over Axelsson et al and any other prior art of record.

New claim 38 is directed to a system including two vessels that can be mated at a distance in which locking members on both vessels provide matable fuel lines that will allow the transfer of fuel between two ships from which the two vessels are respectively deployed. New claim 39 provides that data lines are also couplable when the locking members are mated so that fuel and data may

be transferred. Support for these claims can be found in Figures 6A-6E and on page 19 line 2 through page 21, line 2, and especially on page 20, lines 16-27 of the application as originally filed. Neither Axelsson et al nor the other references of record are believed to suggest such a use of mating vessels deployed between two ships. Therefore new claims 38 and 39 are believed to be allowable over the art of record.

The claims as amended are believed to be allowable and the application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. Issuance of a Notice of Allowance in response to this amendment is therefore courteously solicited.

Respectfully Submitted:



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